

Ms Shan Morgan
Permanent Secretary
Welsh Government
Cathays Park
Cardiff
CF10 3NQ

25 October 2018

Welsh Government Annual Report and Accounts 2017–18

Dear Shan,

Thank you for your attendance to the Public Accounts Committee on Monday 15 October 2018. There are a number of outstanding issues arising from the meeting that the Committee would like further information and clarity on. These are detailed below.

- **Working Group on promotion and facilitation of the Welsh language in the government’s internal administration**

The Welsh Government’s annual report refers to ongoing work on Implementing the Welsh Language Standards (p.18). This section of the report also refers to the work that will continue “during the next period...to further promote and facilitate the language internally within the organisation”.

The Committee raised concerns during the evidence session, that [documents](#) released under the FOI Act show that a working group that was set up by the previous Permanent Secretary to look at this issue in the summer of 2016 and that the working group produced a draft report in March 2017. You confirmed to the PAC on 15 October that this paper still has not gone before the Welsh Government Board to date and that three further pieces of work had been commissioned, looking at:



1. The definition of bilingualism,
2. A review of best practice across the Welsh public sector (in relation to Courtesy Welsh or Level 1 skills),
3. A review of the training opportunities available to staff in the Welsh Government to help them learn the language.

It was also noted that this had been discussed with the Minister for the Welsh Language and Lifelong Learning.

When pressed at the meeting on further detail regarding these 3 further reviews and the next steps, you stated:

“What you’re talking about is the work that would go beyond what we already have in place and the process for that will be to have a discussion at the Board of the Welsh Government. That is what’s still to happen and the three reviews that I have commissioned will contribute to that and will go alongside the original report that you’ve talked about and brought up to date.”

In terms of outstanding issues arising from this the Committee requests the following:

- a. Clarification on (i) the reason for conducting three further pieces of work, (ii) the nature and scope of the work, and (iii) in what way this latest round of reviews differ from the comprehensive report of the Welsh Government’s working group of senior civil servants which already considered in some detail the questions the latest round of reviews seem to be addressing
 - b. An outline of a timetable for submitting the final task and finish group report to the Welsh Government Board, and an update to PAC on the progress of this work
 - c. Once the Board has considered the final task and finish group report – we would like to see further detail on the procedural relationship with the political leadership/Cabinet of the Welsh Government, considering that developing the internal use of Welsh within the civil service is a key part of the Minister’s Cymraeg 2050 strategy.
- **Success Profiling and competencies**



The preamble to the annual report mentions that the priorities of the Welsh Government Civil Service increasingly derive from the Future Generations Act and are given effect through Prosperity for All and the Future Proofing initiative etc. The report also refers to a new internal staff promotion procedure introduced from July this year against this backdrop (p.20). In a [blog](#) on the gov.uk website during the summer, Rupert McNeil, Chief People Officer of the Civil Service in London, outlined a new system of recruitment and promotion for the UK Civil Service, including revisions to the competency framework and a reiteration of it under the Success Profiles approach. Further information is available [here](#). However, the Welsh Government recruitment website still refers candidates to the 2012–2017 Competency Framework of the UK Civil Service.

You spoke at length to us about the work undertaken as part of the Future Proofing initiative and the standards and competencies – developed with the Future Generations Commissioner’s input – required for a new assessment centre for “gateway grades”. However, we remain unclear about which Framework is actually in effect and takes precedent.

Please could you provide:

- a. Clarification on whether there is a statutory requirement on the Welsh Government to follow the latest iteration of the competency framework issued by the UK Cabinet Office around Success Profiling.
 - b. Clarification on whether the Welsh Government civil service will continue to operate under the 2012–17 UK Civil Service Competency Framework, or whether it will be operating Success Profiling, or whether it will formalise its own competency framework as part of the future generations agenda.
- **Welsh Civil Service reform plan and efficiency targets**

The only reference in the annual report to efficiency savings relates to the location strategy efficiency savings. At the Committee meeting you confirmed that the Welsh Government does not have any corporate efficiency savings target, beyond the property estate savings and referred to the Cabinet Secretary for Finance’s Efficiency Board and a series of what appear to be standalone projects. There was



also mention of a corporate services review by Deloitte to report in 4/5 weeks' time, looking at how corporate service resources are deployed across the whole of government.

Please could you provide:

- a. Further clarity on the relationship or otherwise between the efficiency work and the corporate services review & the Future Proofing initiative.
- b. To what extent is the apparent absence of a whole of government strategy concerned with efficiency a departure from the previous Fit for the Future reform programme of the previous Permanent Secretary.
- c. A copy of the report produced by Deloitte following its review of the Welsh Government's corporate services.

I look forward to receiving your response.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nick Ramsay". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

Nick Ramsay AM
Chair

